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ABSTRACT

Based on a 3-year ethnographic study of college students in a Latino Studies course, this book tells the story of how the students navigated their academic life in a predominantly White university to construct their own education. Drawing on the principles of critical pedagogy, the course, "Sociology of Latino/a Culture and Identity," sought to foster a critical perspective on learning and an understanding of the importance of education as a practice for freedom. The students created the class syllabus based on themes that they wished to explore, identified information sources, worked in groups that reported back to the class, and reflected on their progress and on classroom interactions in journal entries. In the course of doing research, the students became aware of the lack of information sources on the Latino community, and came to realize the validity of their own experiences and those of their family and friends as learning resources. The students were primarily Latino (Puerto Rican, Mexican American, Cuban American, South American) but included some Anglo, Asian American, and African American students. The book draws extensively on student journal entries, which demonstrate the students' struggle as they jointly examined their own and each other's personal histories and attitudes and awakened to a critical consciousness that would not accept their prior uninformed experience. Contains 31 references and an index. (SV)

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